

Central Coventry Fire District
Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

September 16, 2008 - 7:00 pm
Central Coventry Fire Station 4

Minutes

1. Call to Order – 7:04 pm

2. Roll Call

President: Girard Bouchard – VP: Joe Bonn

**Anna Mae Lapinski - Robert Crowe - Ron Gizzarelli - Elaine Hunt -
Linda Giguere**

Tax Collector: Jeanne Graemiger

Clerk: Tracy Hall

Chief Seltzer, Asst Chief Tucker

Not Present - Treasurer: Tom LaColle

**3. Approval of Minutes of the previous Board of Directors Meeting –
8/19/08**

Motion to Approve: Linda Giguere Seconded: Anna Mae Lapinski

All Vote Aye

4. Old Business

Motion to add Exemption Committee to the Agenda

Motion: Girard Bouchard Seconded: Anna Mae Lapinski

All Vote Aye

Exemption Committee – Mr. Gizzarelli reported that they were waiting for some information from Mr. Streker and had not met yet.

Staffing Issues – Chief Seltzer suggested we take this off the agenda as the contract had addressed the issue.

Impact Fees – Mr. Bouchard and Chief Seltzer met with Keith White. He suggested that a study should be done and that in the long run we would collect approximately 10% of what the town collects. This is not a number that is set in stone; it's just an estimate. Mr. White's company does not do this type of study. He did suggest a couple of engineering firms. It would probably be quite expensive. He suggested that we would collect around \$25,000 to \$50,000 per year. Mr. Crowe mentioned that often large projects negotiate their impact fees. There was some discussion regarding the costs vs. the benefits. Mr. Bouchard suggested we continue looking into impact fees but that it obviously will not be done for the Annual Meeting. Mr. Crowe suggested contacting URI to see if there was a student to do the needs assessment as their project. Chief Seltzer is unsure if the effort is going to be worth the benefit as we are not going to collect a significant amount of money. He was also concerned that it may make people think the fire department is anti-business. There was some additional discussion. Chief Seltzer will get information on getting colleges involved and will add a section to his report for any new info that he finds.

2008-2009 Budget

Chief Seltzer asked to jump to the Treasurer's Report as it ties in directly with the Budget.

Treasurer's Report

As Mr. LaColle was not present Chief Seltzer presented his report. As Mr. LaColle explained last week we were over on fuel, utilities and a couple other items. However collections were way over the budgeted amount so we did end up with a surplus of money collected over money expended. Mr. LaColle did not expect that we would need to do any borrowing.

Motion to Approve: Linda Giguere Seconded: Robert Crowe

All Vote Aye

2008-2009 Budget

Chief Seltzer presented minor changes to the budget set at the meeting on 9/8/08. Of the 93,497 surplus collections, \$30,000 will go into the new budget and \$63,497 will go to establish the Capital Fund. In checking on healthcare, moving to the plan with a \$1,000 deductible is no change in benefits but we would be self insuring for a portion of the co-pay. It is the exact same plan with only a change in the co-pay. He has been in contact with the Union President on this issue. Also, Chief Seltzer has spoken to two companies Primarily Care and Cornerstone; they handle all of the deductibles and co-pays.

They deal with all of the paperwork and supply a report so the Treasurer writes one check to them and they funnel it to where it needs to go. They employee sees no difference. He hopes to meet

with them this week. Mr. LaColle has done all the calculations and the rate discussed of \$1.67 per \$1,000 will work. The average home owner will see a \$3 - \$4 drop in their tax bill.

Motion to approve budget for presentation to taxpayers

Motion: Linda Giguere Seconded: Robert Crowe

Mr. Gizzarelli asked whether money in the Capital Fund can be used for anything or is it limited to Capital items. Ms. Hunt replied that they had discussed this at the work session and the money can be used for anything as long as it is approved by the Board. Ms. Lapinski added that the plan is to use it only for capital purchases but if there was an emergency the funds could be used with Board approval.

All Vote Aye

5. President's Report

Other than meetings discussed earlier nothing additional

6. Chief's Report

Chief Seltzer presented his report.

Mr. Crowe asked about the calls listed under system malfunction. Chief Seltzer explained that these were building fire alarm systems not street boxes. Chief Seltzer estimates we had about 10 calls for malicious pulling of street boxes. This will stop as we are taking them down. Mr. Crowe asked about alarms being pulled at the high school. Chief Seltzer replied that we haven't had one in long time. All

of the boxes have a cover that when you lift it a buzzer goes off, in addition there are cameras monitoring the corridors. Three students were prosecuted last year because they were caught on camera. Marshal Godin is putting together a package to go out any businesses that are still on the hardwired system so they know what they have to do to convert to radio boxes.

Mr. Gizzarelli asked if under the Emergency Management Committee if there was a provision for water concerns especially for this area. Chief Seltzer replied that during Hurricane Hannah this was monitored the gate for Tiogue Lake was opened and the dam was opened for Johnson's Pond. Mr. Cambio has also added some retention ponds. The pipes under Arnold Rd were cleaned out last year. Chief Seltzer is not sure if they have been cleaned out this year. There was some additional discussion regarding water issues. Chief Seltzer said there is more attention being paid to it.

Motion to Approve: Robert Crowe Seconded: Elaine Hunt

All Vote Aye

In regards to the administrative assistant position, Mrs. Hunt recommends that the committee meet to discuss the resumes that were given to the Board members to review prior to the interviews taking place. Mrs. Hunt has some concerns regarding some of the applicants being overqualified and possibly using this job as a stepping stone or a place to wait for a better job. Mr. Gizzarelli agrees with Mrs. Hunt that this is something to watch for with candidates who are overqualified. A committee meeting is set for Monday

10/22/08 at 6:00 pm here at Station 4.

Michael Stevens has requested reimbursement to pursue a fire science degree at the Community College of RI.

Motion to Approve: Girard Bouchard Seconded: Joe Bonn

Mrs. Hunt asked how much it costs. Chief Seltzer replied that firefighters who do this usually take 1-2 classes a semester at a cost of \$400 - \$800. This comes out of the training budget.

All Vote Aye

7. Treasurer's Report – presented earlier

8. Tax Collector's Report

Mrs. Graemiger presented her report. The unsettled legal accounts will next go to RI Housing for review then to a Tax Sale. There was some discussion regarding the procedures to set up a Tax Sale. Mrs. Lyons has not contacted the Tax Collector. If she has not contacted her by next month the Board will send a letter. Mr. Gizzarelli asked about automatic payment. Mr. Bouchard replied that we have not done that in the past. Mrs. Graemiger said she has had very few requests to use credit cards or automatic payments. There was some additional discussion on this topic.

Motion to Approve: Robert Crowe Seconded: Ron Gizzarelli

All Vote Aye

Mrs. Graemiger received a letter for the Board from a taxpayer who felt it was unfair to charge him interest. As the letter did not request any action it was filed with Board Correspondence. There was some discussion about late payments and interest charged on them.

There is an overdue account that goes back to 2000. The taxpayer has told Mrs. Graemiger several times that the taxes were paid but never produced any proof. Finally when he received a tax sale letter he provided the name of his attorney and our attorney contacted his attorney and he had in fact paid the taxes due at the time. Mr. LaColle got a copy of the check issued to the Washington Fire District for \$12,405.00 and it had been deposited in the Washington account at the time it was issued. However it was never recorded in the tax program. The taxpayer's attorney has said he will pay any difference between the check that was not recorded and the current balance due. Mrs. Graemiger was concerned about posting to the account without actually having the money on hand. There was some additional discussion about this issue. The Board directed Mrs. Graemiger to apply the \$12,405.00 and send a letter to the attorney with the balance due.

9. New Business

Chief Seltzer has a request from a Harris firefighter for reimbursement for having to re-file his federal taxes because there was an error made by the Harris Fire District in regards to employment taxes. Mr. Bouchard said that in 2006 the IRS had fined

the Harris Fire District for some employment taxes that thru the District's error the firefighters did not pay over a number of years. The HFD paid just over \$46,000 to the IRS for the firefighters. There was some discussion regarding this issue. Chief Seltzer will talk to Tom LaColle.

10. Introduction of new business to be considered at the next Board Meeting

11. Good & Welfare

Mr. Bouchard wants the Board to know the KCWA hearings before the PUC are at the end of this month. He and Chief Seltzer will be going make a presentation.

Mr. Bouchard requested of Mrs. Hall that the Annual Meeting agenda be amended to remove the Impact Fee Resolution. There was some discussion regarding the proper procedure for that.

Mrs. Hall informed the Board that the Annual Meeting has been posted in 8 locations as required by the Charter. The locations are all 4 Stations, the Tax Collector's Office, the Coventry Public Library, Borrelli's Bakery and Crystal Cleansers.

Mrs. Graemiger expressed some concern regarding the amount of time she would have after the annual meeting to get the tax bills out. Mr. Bouchard said the Board would help if she needed it.

12. Adjournment – 8:45 pm

Motion to Approve: Elaine Hunt Seconded: Ron Gizzarelli

All Vote Aye